**Setting up of export technology fund**

3855. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

whether Government is considering a slew of measures, including setting up of an Export Technology Fund for small and medium enterprises;

if so, what is the corpus of such a fund;

whether Government also propose to focus and special scheme for countries that India plans to sign under the Free Trade Agreement;

whether such a scheme would allow exporters to hedge violations in US Dollar, as at present 70 per cent of India's exports are pegged against US Dollar; and

if so, whether India's ambitious export target of $ 200 billion for 2008-09 will be achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) An Export Technology Fund for small and medium enterprises has not been set up by the Government.

Does not arise;

There is no special scheme for countries with whom India is negotiating a Foreign Trade Agreement.

Does not arise.

The export target for the year has been set at US$ 200 billion.

**Continuous rise in cement prices**

†3856. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a continuous increase in the prices of cement during the last two years;

whether it is also a fact that the reason behind this price increase has been making of cartel by the cement companies

whether it is also a fact that the Tamil Nadu Government warned these companies to close them down in case of not reducing the prices; and

whether Government will consider to constitute some regulating agency to control this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (d) The prices of cement increased sharply between December, 2005 and March, 2007. However, they have since largely stabilized in 2007-08. The setting up of Cement Regulatory Authority is not considered necessary at this stage.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi